TWO FAIR FRIENDS.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD,

Author of "Robert Aske," "Avice," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

REBELLION.

"HOW do you manage to exist in this hole?" said Sylvia Nunn, in a weary, discontented tone, as she swung herself in the hammock which the Vicar had caused to be put up for Miriam under the great beech tree in the Vicarage garden. "What can you find to do?"

"Do?" answered Miriam. "I have always plenty to do. I work with father; we ride and walk together; and there is Miss Bessie, and the schools, and the poor people. I am always perfectly happy; I have never felt dull, as you call it, in my life. I am so sorry, Sylvia. Though you have hardly been with us two weeks you are tired of us already, and I had so eagerly looked forward to your coming," and Miriam's eyes filled with tears.

"You silly child," said Sylvia, not unkindly. "You are about the only thing I am not tired of; but of this place, where there is nothing to do, and of my two old aunts, I am most decidedly tired," and she looked up to the skies and yawned desperately. She was as pretty a creature as it was possible to see, so fair and dainty lying there in her white frock and black sash, one small foot just visible, with which she was swaying the hammock gently backwards and forwards. "Yes," she resumed, "I shall have to run away again."

"Run away! Where from and where to?" asked Miriam, aghast.

"*From here; where to* is another question. I ran away once before," she continued, carelessly. "Father sent me to school; I didn't like it, so I got away quietly one evening and went home. The difficulty now is to know where to go to. I never would have come over if I had known what my life was to be; but I mean to be a singer, and every one told me I must study in Europe. But I wonder how ever I am going to study here, unless from the birds. *They* make noise enough in the morning, certainly."

"Miss Bessie told me you would not touch the piano, notwithstanding she had had the tuner over from Salisbury; and though I have asked you over and over again, you have never sung to us yet."

Sylvia laughed. "Play on that old tin kettle! I should rather think not. And sing! Well, the rooms are too small, and they wouldn't understand," she answered.

"Sing to me now. Come into the big barn and sing to me," said Miriam.

"Yes, I will; that would be fun," exclaimed Sylvia. "Come," and she threw herself out of the hammock, slipped her arm into Miriam's, and they went together across the garden, out at the back gate into the farm-yard, where there was a large empty barn.

"Shut the door," said Sylvia, "and stand there; I am going to the other end."

There was a little excitement in her voice and manner as she moved away. "I have not sung since I was on board the ship coming over. Then it was worth while; there were plenty of interesting people to listen to me," she said.

"Do you only sing for 'interesting people'?" asked Miriam, laughing. "I wish you could tell me what they are like."

"Quite impossible, my dear. Now listen," and in a second Miriam stood entranced.

Sylvia had a beautiful voice, clear as a silver bell, of the purest soprano, so flexible that the highest notes came forth without an effort, and there was a real artist's soul in that slight figure. All her languor and indifference disappeared as she sang; she was literally transformed.

Miriam had never heard or seen anything so lovely. "Oh, Sylvia," she exclaimed, "it is too delightful; I could

"She played and sang, and filled the house with merriment."
p. 130.

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listen and look at you for ever," and she crossed over, threw her arms round her, and kissed her.

"You understand now my dislike to singing in those little pokey rooms. Why, Miriam, I have sung in a large concert-room, and been clapped and encored. You can't think how nice it is."

"I should be scared out of my senses," answered Miriam.

"I'm not; I just love it," said Sylvia.

In their excitement neither of them had noticed that the barn door had been gently pushed open and two persons had entered, namely, the Vicar and Gilbert Moran. Not till Sylvia had given utterance to the last words did the girls become aware of their presence. "Well done, Sylvia," said Mr. Irving, "I had no idea you were such an artist."

The two friends started and turned round, Sylvia flushing crimson, especially when she saw Gilbert. Then she laughed, saying, "I hope you do not mind my turning your barn into a concert-room."

"My barn is highly honoured," said Mr. Irving. "Only I think you might have favoured us sooner."

Miriam had shaken hands with Gilbert, and almost in the same breath as she bade him welcome said in a low voice, "Was it not beautiful? Is she not lovely, Gilbert?"

"To which question am I to reply first?" he answered, smiling at her enthusiastic admiration. "Supposing you introduce me."

"Sylvia, this is Gilbert Moran," said Miriam, and she stopped short.

"And I am Sylvia Nunn, the Doctor's granddaughter. There, Miriam, I've helped you out," said the young Australian.

"Miriam is not much accustomed to such ceremonious ways," said the Vicar. "Now supposing we go in to tea. Gilbert has come to spend a week of his long vacation with us before going abroad."

"I'm so glad," said Miriam, as all together they left the barn. "But why has my godfather remained behind?" she asked.

"He was not very well," answered Gilbert; "indeed, I am rather anxious about him, and should have much preferred staying with him, but he would not hear of it. I am going with a party to the Engadine for a month. He sent you all sorts of messages, Miriam."

"I take that for granted," she returned, and going on in front with her father, she left Sylvia and Gilbert behind to make acquaintance.

This was by no means difficult, for all Sylvia's evil temper had disappeared as if by magic. She talked and laughed, and made herself so agreeable that it would have been difficult to recognise in her the dissatisfied, fretful girl whose undisciplined habits and open discontent had vexed even patient Miss Bessie.

She was a most fascinating little lady, accustomed evidently to be admired and made much of by the other sex, and Gilbert found himself reduced to being her humble servant; and in return she played and sang, and filled the house—indeed, the whole village—with more noise and merriment than had ever been known there before. Miriam was thrown quite into the shade, but her own admiration for Sylvia was so great she did not feel even her friend Gilbert's defection. The two Misses Nunn were scandalised; the Doctor and the Vicar could not help smiling, though when talking the young lady over together they agreed that Porton could not suffice for her long.

"What on earth I shall do with her I don't know," said the Doctor. "The girls," as he still called his elderly daughters, "are driven wild with her likes and dislikes, even as regards her food; she lies in bed in the morning, and she sits up at night; but the worst thing of all is that she declares she will be a public singer, that she came over to Europe for nothing else."

"She couldn't very well have come to a more unlikely place to attain her object than Porton," said the Vicar.

"But I think when Gilbert's gone I shall have decidedly to look out for something to amuse her. What would Moran say if he saw the way she goes on with Gilbert?" said the Doctor. "She's enough to turn any young man's head, for you'll allow, Vicar, she's winsome to the last degree."

"Certainly, I allow it," answered the Vicar. "But Gilbert's all right; he'll steady himself once he loses sight of her; she's not the wife for him."

"Nor for any man at present," grumbled the Doctor. "To my mind, she's a witch; I know she bamboozles me! When she wants a thing she gets it by hook or by crook," and so saying he shook hands with the Vicar and went home, to find Sylvia on her knees beside Aunt Bessie, entreating her to chaperone her and Gilbert to a concert to be given in Salisbury the following week. "But we shall have to sleep there," Miss Bessie was saying. "We never do such things, my dear."

"Oh, just this once, and I'll never ask again," pleaded Sylvia.

Bessie looked at her father.

"Oh, take her and have done with it," he said, and before he knew what to expect, two arms were round his neck, and he was being kissed and petted in a manner quite irresistible to a grandfather's heart.

CHAPTER VI.

"IT IS WELL."

"YES, sir, he's alive and sensible, but very weak," said Jane, in answer to Mr. Irving's anxious inquiry, as he stood in the hall of Hilton Rectory in the darkness of a winter's morning. An urgent telegram, telling of sudden, serious illness, had called him in haste to the home of his old friend Mr. Moran. He had travelled all night, but the snow was lying thick on the ground, and trains did not fit in, so that it was six a.m. before he reached the Berkshire village of which Mr. Moran was rector.

"You'd better step in here and warm yourself, sir, whilst I get you a cup of tea. I've kept the fire alight all night, thinking you or Mr. Gilbert might arrive at any moment."

"Isn't Mr. Gilbert here yet?" asked Mr. Irving, as he stepped into the comfortable, old-fashioned dining-room, where a blazing fire greeted him.

"No, sir, not yet. I expect he didn't get the telegram as soon as you did, or perhaps he wasn't in when it arrived," answered Jane.

"Does your master know you sent for me?"

"Yes, sir; it was the first thing he asked when he came to—you and Mr. Gilbert."

"What does the doctor say?"

"He don't say much. The master's been ailing for some time, but you know he's never given to complaining."

"Who is with him now?" asked Mr. Irving.

"John, the coachman. He and I have taken by turns to watch him. Ah, sir, there'll never be such another master—a true Christian gentleman," and, unable to restrain her tears, she hastened out of the room.

Half an hour later, Mr. Irving was ushered into Mr.

Moran's room. As Jane had said, he was quite conscious, but as soon as the Vicar's eyes rested on the handsome colourless face, he knew that his friend's days were numbered. Death had set his seal on that kindly, loving heart.

"I knew you would come," he said, returning the pressure of the Vicar's hand. "Have you brought your little maid with you?"

"No, there was no time," answered the Vicar. "I came off as soon as I received the telegram."

"I appreciate the sacrifice," said Mr. Moran. "It is better so—no need to sadden her young life yet. I am going, Cecil, and I am content; indeed, I am more than content, I am glad. My task here is done, a new life awaits me; and for Gilbert it is well. Had I lived, I should have been a thorn in his side; his love and duty to me would have weighed in the balance with his Master's work. Now he will have neither let nor hindrance. It is well!"

"Gilbert will not say so," said the Vicar, sadly; "and as for me, you are my only friend. We shall be very lonely."

"For a time—for a time only. Give my love to your little maid," he murmured, and his eyes closed as if in sleep, he looked so peaceful.

An hour later Gilbert arrived. His distress was very great; he and his father had been so closely united.

"It is well, Bertie, my boy—well for me and for you. The link between us is not broken; the chain is only lengthened from earth to heaven," he said, gently pressing his hands.

They watched beside him all that day. He suffered no pain—was only drowsy, difficult to rouse; his mind quite clear at times, and then again clouded.

Towards evening he put out his hands, and called, "Mary, Mary, my love, are you there?"

"He is dreaming of my mother," said Gilbert.

Dreaming! Was it only dreaming? or at the near approach of death was he conscious of the spirit of her he had loved hovering around, to be the first to welcome him to God's paradise?

Quietly as he had lived, so quietly he fell asleep, Gilbert's hand clasped in his, and Cecil Irving kneeling in prayer beside him. His last words, as he looked up in his son's face, were—

"It is well for you and for me, Bertie!"

Mr. Irving could not possibly leave Gilbert till after the funeral, and so he wrote to Miriam, telling her to ask Miss Bessie to be good enough to stay with her at the Vicarage till his return.

"I miss my little girl sadly," he wrote, "and my darling knows I shall not stay away from her an hour longer than is necessary; but poor Gilbert is so overwhelmed, and there are so many things to be arranged, I cannot leave him until I have performed the last sad offices for his dear father, and laid him to rest in the shadow of his own parish church, beside the wife he loved so well. As soon as that is accomplished, Gilbert must return to Oxford, but he will probably spend part of his vacations with us. From henceforth, of course, our home will be his; but I scarcely think he will be long with us—his heart is more than ever fixed on missionary work. He will, however, remain in England till after his ordination, then he will offer himself for mission service in East Africa. It has been his fixed purpose for years, and now his father is gone he has no tie to hold him back. I am not feeling particularly well myself. I think I caught cold on the journey. Continue to write to me daily, my darling. I hope this will be our last parting for a very long time."

Then he proceeded to give some directions for parish work, and bade her thank Miss Bessie for her kind care and companionship, the letter ending with many tender words of farewell.

The Vicar had left home on the Monday. On the following Friday he read the beautiful Burial Service over his old tutor and true friend. It was a bitterly cold December day, the snow was falling heavily as they stood around his grave, his parishioners, whom he had loved and ministered to, coming from afar to honour his memory.

When all was over, Mr. Irving and Gilbert had just time to return to the rectory, take their luggage, and catch the London express. There they parted, Gilbert going to Oxford, Mr. Irving home.

"You'll spend Christmas with us, of course," said the Vicar, as they shook hands. "Remember, my house is your home from henceforth."

"Thank you, I shall not forget. I will be with you at Christmas; it would be intolerable anywhere else. Give my love to Miriam. I shall have to ask her pardon for keeping you so long away from her; and I am afraid you have a bad cold—you are not looking well."

"Yes, I shall be thankful to get home again," he answered. "I have never been away so long since Miriam was born; indeed, never," he added, remembering how short his married life had been. "Now good-bye, my dear fellow; you'll just catch your train, but I shall have an hour and a half to wait for mine, I expect."

When the Vicar reached Waterloo he found he was right. An up train was due in about half an hour, but there was no down train for an hour later. He was thoroughly worn out, and after taking a cup of coffee and a roll in the refreshment room, went into the waiting room and settled himself in a corner with his newspaper.

People went and came, and finding it impossible to fix his mind even on his paper, he rolled himself up in his rug, closed his eyes, and composed himself for sleep.

He must have slept nearly an hour, when suddenly he awoke, hearing a familiar voice say—

"I am much obliged to you. I will certainly go to the boarding-house you mention; and to-morrow, if you will kindly give me those introductions, I will avail myself of them."

Mr. Irving sat up. Could he be mistaken, or was that really Sylvia Nunn speaking in her pretty girlish voice to an utter stranger, whose appearance was certainly not such as to inspire confidence in anyone less really innocent than herself? They had entered the waiting-room together, and were standing before the fire. Sylvia, shivering slightly, was warming herself and looking down, and Mr. Irving noticed that her face was unusually serious. A great fear came over him. Where had she come from? Whither was she going? He waited yet a moment to hear what the man would answer her.

"I am sure you will be comfortable in that house," he said. "If you would allow me, I would accompany you there, but as you do not desire that, I will not fail to call upon you to-morrow morning."

"Sylvia!"

The girl looked quickly round, and found herself face to face with Mr. Irving. She uttered a little cry, turned deadly white, and looked wildly about, as if seeking a way of escape. But the Vicar took her hand, put it on his arm, and drew her on one side.

"Hush," he said, "don't attract attention to yourself. I ask no questions, I simply insist upon your coming back home with me."

"I won't," said Sylvia.

"Then I must give you in charge, and telegraph for your grandfather," said Mr. Irving, sternly. "Who was that man you were talking to?" he asked.

"I don't know; he was very kind, and would have helped me," she answered, struggling not to cry.

Looking about for her late companion, she was surprised to find that he had disappeared, and her face fell.

Mr. Irving looked at his watch.

"My train will be going in half an hour," he said. "Decide what you will do, Sylvia, for you and I do not part company until I place you in safe hands. You were about to commit some desperate folly, which God in His great mercy has saved you from. I can only hope you may live to repent and recognise His great and infinite goodness."

He spoke quite low, and gently pushed Sylvia into the seat he had just vacated, and stood in front of her so as to screen her. She remained sullenly silent.

"You had better decide," he said at last, but without showing the least sign of impatience.

"I have told you I cannot go back to that life; I shall die there. I am born an artist, and I must live an artist's life. If you take me back I shall run away again."

"That is as may be," said Mr. Irving. "At present it is my duty to take you back. Come, you have done a very wrong thing. Don't make it worse, Sylvia. What shall I say to Miriam?"

For the first time there was a sign of yielding. Sylvia's lip quivered.

"You will never let me speak to her again," she said.

"On the contrary, I will take you straight to the Vicarage whilst I go to your grandfather. You shall sleep with Miriam to-night, and I promise you I will do my best to forward your wishes in the future if you will only be obedient and not self-willed. Now will you come?"

She looked up at him. "I suppose I must," she said, with a sigh.

"Come, then," said the Vicar.

She rose, took his arm, and together they went to the ticket office. Not for anything would Mr. Irving have trusted her out of his sight; he hurried her across the platform into the train, but not till he heard the whistle and the train moved out of the station did he feel sure she would not escape him. (*Continued on page* 145.)

A GREAT WOMAN.

(2 Kings iv.)

BY MRS. SKINNER.

SHE lived at Shunem, a beautiful village, surrounded by fair gardens and cornfields, and lying under the cool grey shadows of the hill of Moreh. A farmer's wife. "*What! A farmer's wife a great woman?*" Yes, for "some are born great," but "some achieve greatness." You may also question the term, a great *woman*, but "it is as great to be a woman as to be a man."

She was great in kindness. There came a preacher to her village, and she said to him, "Now, you must come and stay with us." Again and again he came, and again and again he received the same invitation, so that no one could say she did it because it was some new excitement.

Then one quiet evening, while her good man was resting from his labours, she had a little talk with him. Please take note what she did not say, "I find it very expensive having this teacher coming so often. It makes me a great deal of work, and it interferes sadly with our nice cosy times together. 'Two's company, three's none.' Besides, we can easily make the excuse that we have no spare bedroom."

Oh, no, there was no such mean talk as that. Note what she *did* say: "This teacher is a very holy man; let us build him a little balcony chamber on the wall, there is plenty of room. Then we'll furnish it, so that he can come whenever he likes, to study or rest."

"Come under my cloak," said a wee little maid to a shivering child. "But it's not big enough for two," was the mournful response. "Oh, yes, it is," cheerily; "why, you know *it stretches*." Sweet little teacher! The world is full of cold, weary travellers, and we English housewives need to be greater in kindness than we are, to stretch out our hands oftener in sympathetic help, not noting the cost.

She was great in contentment. The receiver of all this kindness naturally wished to make her some return. Said he, "Should I speak to the king about you? He might be able to put your husband into some good office." What! and leave her home and neighbours, garden and fields? "Oh, no, thank you. I'll dwell among my own people. They may be a very humble set; but then I'm happy with them, and who could wish for more?" She was surely sister to the old shepherd who praised both rainy and sunny weather, and when asked how he could conscientiously do so, answered, "No sort of weather ever comes but that which pleases God." Content to take what He sent, content to fill the sphere God had chosen. Much of our restlessness and fretfulness is caused by the absence of content, and the presence of a spirit which chafes and rebels against the bounds set us by a strong but kind Power. Do you sigh for the lordly halls and the city's gay scenes? Content can point you to bowers of bliss in your shady lanes and garden, and pictures of fairest beauty in your green woods and flower-flecked meadows.

She was great in the use of plain speech. Evidently she was in the habit of calling a spade a spade. When promised a wonderful gift she did not say "Thank you" with her lips, while in her heart she was saying "I don't believe you," but said right out, "Do not tell me a lie." She might well have hesitated, seeing the speaker was the man she had so often entertained because she thought he was so holy. That little expression revealed her to be a woman great in truthfulness, whose word her neighbours could depend upon, who never said she was glad to see them when she wished them hundreds of miles away. Oh the charm of absolute truthfulness!

She was great in love. Her plain-speaking gave no

offence. It is too precious and rare a thing to do that. The wonderful gift came—a baby boy! She had spent a good bit of money in building and furnishing the guest chamber, but she had been well repaid. And when the little one could toddle and prattle—oh, what a joy it was then! But there came a hot, sultry day, when a young farm labourer carried the little one home, saying, "He is ill, mistress." She took him on to her lap—what better place could there be for a sick child? Her maids fetched her all the remedies she could think of; but as the evening shadows lengthened, she saw a shadow steal over her

Elisha raising the Shunammite's Son.

(From the painting by James Northcote, R.A.)

child's face, never cast by setting sun, and then he died. Why did she thus nurse and tend him? Because she loved him. Love made it easy. Her love would have been as chains to his spirit, if it could have been, and kept it from its heavenward flight. "Ah," say you, "we know how she must have felt as she kissed the cold lips and felt no response." Then you also know something of what God our Father feels when so often, day by day, He gives us His kisses of love, but receives no token of gratitude in return.

She was great in energy. This is shown in many ways. She was a woman who kept her eyes open. She noticed the constant passing of the holy man, and saw what his need was. Then she *constrained* him. A phlegmatic woman takes "No" for an answer very readily, but not so the great woman. She was prompt in action, too. No time was wasted in useless grief; she could hide her grief till such time as all hope had fled. Said she to her husband, "I want you to send me at once one of the young men, and get me an ass to ride. I am going at once to our friend." "Why go now?" he asked in perplexity. Then she answered, "It will be all right," and, seeing that the young man did not get the ass ready quickly enough, she saddled it herself. As for the poor husband, it is quite possible that the reason of her journey never dawned upon his mind till she came back again. We learn from her, amongst other things, these three lessons:—(1) The advantage of self-control. "Real glory springs from the silent conquest of ourselves." (2) The power of prompt action.

> "Be great in act as you have been in thought;
> Be stirring as the time, be fire with fire."

(3) To take our troubles where real help can be found.

She was great in faith. Her trouble was great, but "great faith must have great trials. We must expect great troubles before we attain to much faith." When she had journeyed fourteen miles, as fast as the ass would carry her, and came within sight of the fair wooded heights of Carmel,

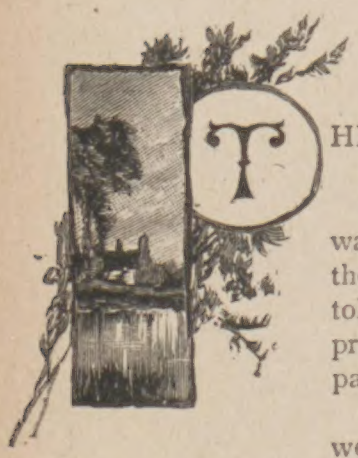
she was met by a messenger, who asked, "Is it well with the child?" And mark the firm reply, "It is well"—a similar answer to what she had given her husband. And when she reached the holy man's presence she would not consent to return without him, so great was her faith in his power to help. She had the faith that could, when surrounded by pressing, surging trouble, see ever a clear pathway upwards to heaven and God.

She was great in thankfulness. When the child was restored, and she was bidden to take it once more into her loving arms, what was her first impulse? To snatch it up and smother it with kisses? No, but speechless with feeling, she threw herself on her knees at the feet of the man of God, and spelt out in action the thanks she could not speak. "Yes," you say, "and well she might. But my dead lamb has not been restored to me!" If this woman of Shunem had not shown faith she would never have had the opportunity of showing thankfulness. If you are murmuring that your little one was not restored, where is your faith? Can you not, though it be ever so faintly at first, thank God that your lambkin is safe? That arms stronger and more loving than yours hold it? That some bright day, in a sunnier land than Shunem, He will give it back to you?

O for the *greatness* of *kindness*, *contentment*, *plain-speaking*, *love*, *energy*, *faith*, and *thankfulness!*

THE STOLEN CURRANTS.

A Story for Parents.



THE subject of the sensitiveness of children and how the fear of punishment often makes them untruthful, was discussed recently by a family at their fireside, when a gentleman present told the following story, which we reproduce as being of interest to every parent.

"My father was a very poor, hard-working man," he said, "and we were brought up in the simplest and most economical manner. Not a penny was spent unnecessarily, and the outlay of a sixpence or a shilling was thoroughly considered before the talked-of purchase was made. We had a little kitchen garden, where we raised a few vegetables and small fruits, and upon which we depended for all that we had on our table of those articles. Our meals for the most part consisted of oatmeal porridge, which our mother cooked herself, and to which we came day after day, month after month, and year after year, with the relish which hearty boys have when their appetites are natural and unpampered. Meats were a luxury, as were the few vegetables and fruits which, by patient care, we were able to bring forth from our little garden patch.

"We were never allowed to pick and eat a single berry or a string of currants. Only a few times during the season of them was there a dish of these fruits on the table, and these, as can readily be imagined, were considered a great treat. The larger part of all that the bushes yielded was gathered with the greatest care by our mother, and converted into jelly and jam, which were put away on the top shelf of a little cupboard, to be used on holidays, or when some occasional or special guest sat at our table.

"So few were the bushes, and so carefully did our mother watch them, that it was easy for her to know at once as she watered them on a certain night, that someone had taken about a pint of her precious currants. My brother was three years older than I. He could play many a trick on my father and mother, and, with a cool, innocent manner, deny rightful charges made against him. I had not yet learned these ways.

"Edward and I had been sent together, after supper that night, to take our only weekly newspaper to a friend a mile away, who, after reading it, sent her boy with it to another friend, for most of our class of working people were too poor to take even one weekly paper. And, by the way, the paper at last came back to us, and I have often seen four or five neighbours come into our sitting-room of an evening and stay an hour or so, hearing the news, which my father would read, about London and the great world outside our little manufacturing town.

"Well, when we returned that evening from this errand, my mother, with clouded brow, charged Edward with stealing the missing currants. He denied the charge point-blank, although I had seen him steal them. But his face gave no sign of guilt. So mother turned upon me, saying—

"'Then, Charles, you stole them.'

"My face flushed at once, and I could hear my heart beat, but I replied in a positive tone, 'No, mother, I did not steal them.'

"Doubtless the heightened colour in my face was conclusive evidence to my mother that I was lying. She instantly responded to my straightforward denial, 'Charles, do not add a lie now to your sin of stealing. You need not try to deceive me. I know you stole those currants.'

"'I am not trying to deceive you,' I replied. 'I have not picked one string of currants from those bushes this whole summer. That is the truth.'

"'I don't believe you,' said mother, 'and I shall shut you up in a room by yourself, and you shall have nothing but bread and water until you confess the truth.'

"Then she told us both to sit down, and after going out and speaking to father in the garden, they came in, and bringing the two younger children from the kitchen, mother read from the Bible about the terrible sin of lying and the punishment of all liars, and my father prayed particularly for me, that I might see the error of my way and confess my sin that night to my mother and to the Lord.

"After prayer, and some more questioning by both father and mother, I still reiterating my innocence, and stating the truth that I had not stolen even one string of currants, my mother sent us to bed, telling me that I need not come out of the room in the morning.

"For three days I was kept in that room alone. For those three days I had dry bread to eat and only water to drink. Three times a day I was asked if I would confess my sins of stealing and lying. I would not confess. Neither would I tell mother that Edward took the fruit. I was angry and hurt that mother should charge me with taking it, and disbelieve my word and punish me, with no evidence that I was the thief except that I flushed when she charged me with it.

"But the third night I was quite tired of my confinement. I wanted to get back to school, and to have my play with

my mates. So I considered the matter, and deliberately concluded to lie to my mother, as I saw no other way of release. I reflected, 'I will lie about this, and after a few years, when I am a man, I will tell my mother about it, and how wrong she was in accusing me so unjustly!' I had a great reverence for my mother, and I loved her dearly, although she was very severe in her discipline, and I felt that it would not be becoming in a boy of my age to tell her then what I had thought of the matter, but I believed it would be right for me to do so when a man.

"So, the next morning, when mother brought me some bread and a glass of water, and asked again, 'Charles, are you ready to confess?' I said, 'Yes, mother, I am. I stole the currants.'

"Then mother told me how she had been praying for me, how much better it would have been for me to have confessed at once, and so on, and hoped that this lesson would keep me from ever committing such another sin.

"That experience made a great impression upon me, and taught me a lesson which I have never forgotten. Fifteen years passed, and I then told my mother the whole truth about the currants. Every detail was still as fresh in my mind as when I stood before her innocent, and received a punishment which belonged to another. To my utter surprise, my mother had no recollection of the occurrence.

"That, too, taught me a useful lesson—namely, that our conduct towards our children makes a lasting impression upon them, and that we, as parents, should be far more careful and far more guarded than we are in all our discipline and in all we say to our children.

"My mother was a devoted, earnest, Bible-reading, Bible-loving Christian. She abominated lying, and yet by her unjust, and, as it seems to me, unwarranted charge against me, and also by my false idea of honour in shielding my brother Edward, she forced me to lie to her as my only escape from further punishment.

"I look back to my dear mother's training, severe as it often was, as, in the main, just what I needed; but in the incident which I have related I feel that she made, and that many parents make, a great mistake. In my judgment, a boy is far more likely to do right, and to be what his parents desire, if they believe in him. Too many are suspicious of their children. For a boy to have the consciousness in his heart that his father and mother believe in him, is an untold blessing to him. Albrecht Dürer, the famous painter, who left home when a mere boy, and who was noted for his modesty, his truthfulness, his purity, his well-bred manner, and an unusual nobility of character, said that the constant assurance that he was understood and believed in by his father, who had most control over his life, was an inestimable blessing to him. And I am sure, from the remembrance of that experience about the currants—when the idea that my mother and father refused to believe me, and thought I had both stolen the fruit and lied about it, made me sad for years—that most children are far more sensitive to such treatment than is generally supposed to be the case."

WHICH SHALL IT BE?

I AM sadly conscious that thousands of mothers are so overburdened that the actual demands of life from day to day consume all their time and strength. Now, the old proverb advises us, "Of two evils, choose the least;" and the question therefore arises, which would you call the least—an unpolished stove or an untaught boy? Dirty windows, or a child whose confidence you have failed to gain? Cobwebs in the corner, or a son over whose soul a crust has formed so strong that you despair of melting it with your hot tears and your fervent prayers?

I have seen a woman who was absolutely ignorant of her children's habits of thought, and who never felt that she could spare half an hour to read or talk with them—I have seen this woman spend ten minutes in ironing a sheet (there were six in the washing); one hour in fluting the ruffles and arranging the puffs of her little girl's "sweet white dress"; thirty minutes in polishing tins which were already bright and clean; and forty minutes in decorating a cake for tea, because "company" was expected!

When the mother, a good, orthodox Christian, shall appear before the great white throne, to be judged for "the deeds done in the body," and to give in her report of the Master's treasures placed in her care, I can fancy there will be some such questions and answers as these:—

"Where are the boys and girls that I gave thee?"

"I was busied in keeping my house clean and in order, and my children wandered away!"

"Where wert thou while thy sons and thy daughters were learning lessons of dishonesty, malice, and impurity?"

"I was polishing furniture and ruffling dresses and making beautiful nicknacks!"

"What hast thou to show for thy life-work?"

"The tidiest house, and the best starching and ironing in all the neighbourhood!"

Oh, these children! these children! the restless, eager boys and girls whom we love more than our own lives! Shall we devote our time and strength to that which perisheth, while the rich garden of our child's soul lies neglected, with foul weeds choking out all worthy and beautiful growths? Shall we exalt the incidentals of life to the rank of a purpose, to the shutting out of that work whose results reach beyond the stars?

Fleeting, O mother! are the days of childhood; and speckless windows, snowy linen, the consciousness that everything about the house is faultlessly bright and clean, will be sorry comfort in that day wherein we shall discover that our poor boy's feet have taken the path which shall lead him out of the way to all eternity. H. M. MORRIS.

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

YEARS gone, when, strolling to the town,
I met her in the meadow,
The noontide sun shone brightly down,
And flung her brow in shadow.

A sweet smile mantled o'er her face,
As if the flowers had taught her—
Had shared their loveliness and grace
With her, the farmer's daughter.

She curtseyed gently as she passed,
And gave me kindly greeting;
I see her still—it was our last,
Our first, our only meeting.

And whither went she—can you guess—
Upon that sunny morrow?
To help the homes of sad distress,
And cheer the heart of sorrow;

To give rest to the aching head,
To care for all things human,
To kneel beside the dying bed—
An angel, yet a woman!

With heart all innocent of guile,
She treads the path of duty;
Her trust in Heaven illumes her smile,
And glorifies her beauty.

FOR MOTHERS AND WIVES.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

PREPARING FOR WINTER.

TO prepare for cold weather betimes is one of the best means of which we have any knowledge of preventing cold, coughs, and sore throats. If only mothers would make their children put on warm clothing *early* in autumn, before cold winds begin to blow and chilling rains begin to fall, many an illness would be avoided.

Mothers who have not already done so, should this year consider seriously whether they would not do well to provide the children with undergarments made entirely of flannel. If they would but give flannel a fair trial it is most unlikely that they would ever favour calico and linen again for making underclothing. Nearly all doctors speak in praise of flannel, and mothers who have tried it are quite enthusiastic about it. It is chiefly valuable because it is healthful—it keeps the wearer warm, maintains the body at an equal temperature, and prevents sudden chills, which are a fruitful cause of mischief. More than this, it makes a great saving of trouble. Flannel garments are much more easy and pleasant to sew than cotton garments are. Also, they are very much more easily washed; and no one need be afraid of washing a few flannel garments at home; thus the laundress' bill is lessened. Flannel also requires no getting up; no starching and no ironing, and if carefully washed it lasts a long time. Mothers who from prejudice refuse to adopt flannel for children's underwear punish both the children and themselves.

It is not at all uncommon to meet with people who say they have tried flannel and cannot do with it, because it wears out quickly, or it irritates the skin. If we make inquiry, however, we shall find that in nine cases out of ten, persons who speak thus have not given flannel a *fair* trial. Sometimes they have not worn pure flannel at all; they have used some of the cheap imitations of the material which are largely manufactured and sold, and which are partly composed of cotton. These materials have very little warmth in them and scarcely any wear. As for the irritation of the skin caused by flannel, it is simply a matter of custom; it ceases when a garment has been washed once, and it is seldom experienced unless the flannel is new.

It is true that good flannel is more expensive than calico to begin with. But in the long run its employment leads both to economy and comfort. Therefore we repeat that mothers who have hitherto been faithful to calico, would do well to pause for a short time, before the cold weather sets in this year, and think whether they would not be wise to arrange that their children should from this time begin to wear flannel. Experience has proved that Dr. Hunter's maxim, "If children are to keep healthy they must have plenty of milk, plenty of sleep, and plenty of flannel," is a rule that admits of few exceptions.

AN UNFORTUNATE HABIT.

Many well-meaning people have a most unpleasant and improper habit, when they meet their friends after not seeing them for a time, of commenting upon their looks in a pitying sort of way. Thus they will say, when greeting a friend, "How pale you look!" "Have you had an illness?" "You are getting quite thin." Yet, if the truth were known, the individuals referred to may be feeling rather better than usual, and may be made quite uncomfortable by the commiseration unexpectedly bestowed upon them.

Before we allow ourselves to make disparaging comments on the looks of our friends, we ought to remember that all human beings are more or less nervous, and that up to a point they are what they fancy themselves to be. If we say to a friend that he looks ill, we put a thought into his mind that it requires a good deal of strength of will to resist. The tendency of our remarks must be to make him less cheerful; yet the world is quite sad enough, there is no need for us to manufacture anxiety. A wise woman said not long ago, in a letter to a friend, that the longer she lived she was more and more impressed with the duty of *finding* happiness; and her saying was, after all, only a repetition of the advice given again and again by the Apostle Paul in his Epistles, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

Of course, every one knows that when friends say to us that we are looking ill they do not mean to send us into the dumps. For the most part they speak thoughtlessly, and imagine perhaps that they are merely giving utterance to a sympathetic interest in our welfare. Their remarks remind us very much, however, of the little child, three years old, who upon being told to be silent unless he had something to say, looked up at his mother with wide-open eyes and said quite earnestly, "But, mamma, I want to talk when I haven't anything to say."

The Farmer's Daughter.

Household Breakages.

"People should hire servants who do not break things," said Lydgate, the young doctor in "Middlemarch," just before his marriage. The remark makes us smile. Where are we to meet with such servants?

One of the most usual trials which housewives of every sort and condition have to endure is that of household breakages of crockery and china. The wife who has kept house only for a few years would feel quite rich if she could set in order and in good condition before her all the articles of beauty which have once been hers. This is impossible, however, and all she can do is to bear her losses with fortitude, and try so to arrange affairs that in the future there shall be fewer breakages than in the past.

One very effectual means of preventing mischance of the kind is to give out as many articles as are needed for every-day use, and *no more*. There can be no greater mistake than to have "a good many things to go at," as housemaids say. When the supply is limited, cups and tumblers have to be washed at once; but if the supply is abundant, there is a temptation to leave them lying about, when they are very likely to be broken. Another way of causing china and glass to be treated respectfully is to keep lists of all the crockery on the premises, and let these lists be checked at frequent and appointed intervals, both by the mistress and maid. This plan makes the care of breakable goods an important matter, and lifts every accident into the rank of an incident which must be noted.

A third means is to be careful to boil all glass and crockery before taking it into use. This keeps it from chipping and cracking readily. The articles should be made to stand firmly in a saucepan so that they will not touch each other, covered with cold water brought gently to the boil, boiled for a few minutes, and left untouched till cold.

Blackberry and Apple Jam.

When blackberries are abundant, this is one of the most delicious and economical jams that can be made. Take an equal weight of the two fruits. Peel and core the apples, cut them into thick wedges, and steam them till they fall to pulp. (They should be steamed the day before the jam is made.) Boil the blackberries separately and gently till the juice flows. Put the two fruits together, and add three quarters of a pound of sugar to each pound of fruit, and boil till the jam will set, which will probably be in about fifteen minutes. Tie down in the usual way. N.B.—Boiling blackberries gently makes them soft.

A SENSIBLE NEIGHBOUR.

MRS. SLATTERLY never could make it out. It was always a mystery to her that a widow with three children and a very small income could be neat and clean, pay her rent punctually, and present an appearance not incompatible with ample means. It was a puzzle to Mr. Slatterly also. He had quite three hundred a year, while the widow had only one; yet her home was as commodious as his. The two houses stood side by side. Mrs. Pownall and Mr. and Mrs. Slatterly were neighbours, but not exactly friends. Not that Mrs. Pownall was in the least proud, but she was, to put it in Mrs. Slatterly's words, "not at all chatty."

"There's only a bit of a paling between our two gardens," said Mrs. Slatterly, "but never a word do we exchange over them; leastways, not many words, for almost as soon as I open my mouth she's sure to say she's got something to do. Why she can't chat a bit, I can never make out."

"And how she manages, I can't tell," added Mr. Slatterly.

"Do you think it's charity?" suggested his wife.

"No," he replied, "for she's proud in her way. I'll ask Mr. Crewe when I meet him. Perhaps he may give us a hint about it."

The Rev. Charles Crewe was the curate, who was much among the parishioners, being left in sole charge during the prolonged absence of the incumbent. If anybody in the parish could tell how it was that Mrs. Pownall, with a third of the income the Slatterlys had, could keep up a better appearance, he could.

Now, it so happened that Mr. Crewe had met the widow in the previous week, and the topic of conversation had turned on that of household management. The Curate was therefore master of the subject when he called on the Slatterlys a few days later. They dined at one—or were supposed to do so—and he had no idea of intruding upon that meal; but though it was two o'clock when he arrived, he found them only just commencing dinner.

"I am really very sorry," he said, halting on the threshold, "but I fancied you had finished dinner. I will call by-and-by."

"Come in, sir," said Mr. Slatterly, with good-natured hospitality. "If you haven't had your luncheon, have a bit with us; and if you have, come and sit down by the window."

Mr. Crewe made no further objection, but sat down in the window indicated, and Mr. Slatterly commenced carving.

"You see, sir," he said, as he tackled the joint, "what we want to talk to you about is—dear me, how tough this pork is!"

"That *can't* be," said Mrs. Slatterly; "it's quite a young porker."

"Very well, Maria. Well, sir, what we want to talk to you about is—I tell you, Maria, that the pork isn't done. You ought to have had it in the oven at eleven, and it was past twelve before it was put in."

"The girl had not lighted the fire," said Mrs. Slatterly.

"Why not?"

"Because you had not cut any wood," answered Mrs. Slatterly. "You put it off until the last minute, and then we could not find the hatchet."

"Which you, my dear, had been using the back of to hammer nails in with, and left it upstairs. But never mind the hatchet, I say this pork is not done, so we had better cut off the outside, and cook the joint again."

"Which is a regular waste," put in Mrs. Slatterly.

"But that we can't help," said Mr. Slatterly. "Well, sir, as I was saying, we want to know how it is that Mrs. Pownall—Maria, do look at these potatoes, boiled to a pulpy paste. Who can eat them?"

"Well, James," returned Mrs. Slatterly, "when we tried the pork at half-past one and found it wasn't *near* done, the potatoes were already on—and potatoes won't wait."

"Those potatoes are entirely wasted," said Mr. Slatterly, checking his rising anger, "and I must eat bread. Well, sir," he continued, addressing the Curate, "what we want to know is, how is it—Maria, where's the bread-knife?"

"I haven't seen it since yesterday," replied his wife. "Anne was using it for scraping the mud off your boots."

"For *what?*"

"Scraping the mud off your boots, James," said Mrs. Slatterly, emphatically. "The bread-knife was the only one without an edge, and as you took the old knife used for the boots to dig up daisy roots on the lawn, Anne had nothing to use for the purpose of——"

"It seems to me that everything here is used for what it was not intended for," said Mr. Slatterly, "and the waste and expense of it are terrible. Now, sir, as I was saying," he continued, turning once more to the Rev. Charles Crewe, who had been listening with a very quiet face, "what we want to know is, why Mrs. Pownall, with only a hundred a year coming in, should *appear* to be so much better off than we are, with three times that income?"

"If you had asked me an hour ago," replied the Curate, "I might not have been able to give you a decided answer, but now I can. It appears to me that the whole secret lies in the fact that Mrs. Pownall orders her household by system and method."

"Well, it's true enough, we don't do *that*," said Mrs. Slatterly; "but I do not see why not having things in such apple-pie order should run away with money. There's a leg of pork; it has to be cooked, and it doesn't matter much whether it's ready at one or two."

"It isn't ready now," grumbled her husband; "and only last week you gave half a shoulder of mutton to a tramp because neither of us would eat it."

"If I might offer advice on the subject," said the Rev. Charles Crewe, "I would suggest to Mrs. Slatterly that she pay her neighbour a visit and frankly ask how she manages her house."

"A good idea," said Mr. Slatterly.

But Mrs. Slatterly did not see it. The old enemy Pride came in and said to her, "What! go and ask a woman who is too mighty to have a chat over the palings with you to instruct you how to keep your house. Never!" Accordingly she said to the minister—

"Oh, sir, I do not think I could do that. Mrs. Pownall turns up her nose at me."

"Turns up her nose at you!" exclaimed the astonished gentleman. "Why, she is about the meekest and most humble-minded woman I know. Call upon her to-morrow morning—tell her frankly that you would like to see how she manages her house for the day, and you will find very little pride in her, I'll warrant you."

"It would be a good idea, Maria; indeed it would," urged Mr. Slatterly. "I'm sure we should both benefit by it."

"Very well," said Mrs. Slatterly, somewhat decisively, "I'll do it. But I'm sure she'll be too busy or too proud even to talk to me."

Now, Mrs. Slatterly was in possession of one good quality—she kept her word. If she said decidedly she would do a thing, she did it; and having said she would go to Mrs. Pownall, she went.

Her husband expected her back almost immediately with a fiery face and indignant air following the anticipated rebuff, but hour after hour passed and she did not return. He had to wait until the evening, when she came in with a smiling but rather mysterious countenance, and to her husband's queries she declined to give any answer.

"Never mind what we've been doing," she said. "All I can tell you is that I've been receiving lessons. You shall soon learn all about it."

Early on the following morning he began to learn. Mrs. Slatterly got up at half-past six instead of eight, and having roused the servant, gave her a few very decided directions about getting breakfast ready and "going on" with certain cleaning work.

"And just remember," the astonished Mr. Slatterly heard her say, "that to-morrow is Tuesday—which is washing day—and Tuesday will be washing day regularly every week. Look to your copper—lay the fire overnight and have the copper filled with water so that there shall be no delay in the morning."

"Used to be put off till Thursday, and sometimes Friday," murmured Mr. Slatterly, and, quite aghast at the sudden development of the bump of order in his wife, he put his head under the clothes and tried to get asleep again.

But he was only just starting with a fresh dream when he was aroused. "Half-past seven," cried his wife, shaking him; "breakfast at eight, and we must begin with a little punctuality if we want to go through the day properly."

"But, my dear," he remonstrated, "I seldom get up till nine."

"You sent me to take lessons," she replied, "and you must take the consequence—get up at once. What is the good of one of us reforming? Mrs. Pownall says that *the true secret of domestic economy lies in system and regularity.*"

Mr. Slatterly did not like the idea of comparative early rising, but he got up, and went down to a breakfast so well ordered that he was quite delighted.

And in this way he found himself "regulated" throughout the day. It was a little trying to him at first, and it evidently cost Mrs. Slatterly an effort to carry out, but the lesson she had received from Mrs. Pownall must have been a very impressive one to have taken root so deeply in such apparently uncongenial soil as slatternly Mrs. Slatterly.

At one o'clock there was a capital dinner ready. All the rough housework was done; Mrs. Slatterly and her maid had both "cleaned themselves up a bit," and there was an air of ease and comfort in the place Mr. Slatterly had never known before. He and his wife went out for a walk in the afternoon, and although usually given to "nagging" a little at each other, they had nothing of the sort on this particular occasion.

In the evening Mrs. Slatterly brought out a book and pen and ink. Opening the book, she disclosed the fact that it was ruled with blue lines and a money column.

"What's that for?" asked Mr. Slatterly.

"To keep account of our domestic expenditure," was the calm reply. "You see, if we find ourselves spending too much we can easily look back and settle upon the things we can do without."

"Does Mrs. Pownall do that?"

"Yes; every night the outlay of the day is put down, and every week, month, and year is cast up. It is very easy. All you have to do is——"

"All right, my dear," said Mr. Slatterly; "I shall see how you work it. It's a splendid idea."

I need elaborate very little more upon the lesson Mrs. Pownall taught her neighbour. It was so good that a revolution took place in the Slatterly home—regular hours, regular meals, and a systematic arrangement of the housework gave comfort to that home which had never been known by its occupants before. Even washing day, that

used to be so many hours of turmoil, hurry, worry, soapsuds, steam, and quarrelling, passed over as quietly as the rest.

But it must not be supposed that *one* visit to Mrs. Pownall fully initiated Mrs. Slatterly into the art of domestic economy. No! It required many journeys to and fro to ask about little matters before the latter lady felt she could fairly run alone, but when she did feel confidence in herself, what a pace she went at!

At first, as a matter of course, Mr. Slatterly and the house were regulated a little too much, but in time that toned down, and Mrs. Slatterly settled into the position of an admirable housewife, who knew how far a pound ought to go, and took good care the pound did its full duty towards its owner.

And what was oddest of all was the change which came over Mrs. Slatterly with regard to talking over the palings between the gardens. If even Mrs. Pownall herself had suggested it, she would have been met with an indignant reproach.

"For it is little time I get," said Mrs. Slatterly to her husband; "although there is no hurry or worry, no bother, and the time passes *so* pleasantly."

"For both of us," he replied. "It's now a year, Maria, since you began housekeeping on Mrs. Pownall's plan, and I find I am just one hundred pounds better off than I was last year; so there's more than the mere comfort in this system. She is a good woman, and we have reason to be thankful she is such a sensible neighbour—"

"As not to waste her time in gossiping," murmured Mrs. Slatterly, under her breath, as she went out to arrange the work for the morrow.

E. H. B.

"MOTHER'S PRAYERS."

MOST Christian mothers pray *for* their children (at least we hope they do), but do they, as a rule, pray *with* them? To my mind, one of the highest privileges a mother has is prayer, and one of the greatest blessings of her children is to *hear her pray*.

Our boys and girls often hear us correct, admonish, and advise them; but do they ever hear us plead with God that the faults which grieve *us*, and make *them* unhappy, may be removed? that grace may be given them to overcome besetting sins which will prove their master if not conquered? Think for one moment of the strength ministered to your boy (struggling against a temptation that is *almost* too strong), as he hears "mother" tell God about it, and ask in tender, loving words for the help he feels he needs!

My little sons have come to me and said, "Oh, mother, do ask God that I may get through my lessons well to-day," and my heart has thrilled with joy that my children have learned *something* of the value of prayer. It will not stop there if mother watches their lives, and learns what each one's besetting sin is, and what difficulties present themselves to each, and instead of talking a great deal about it, kneels down beside their bed and pours out her heart's desire to God. Why should not our children *hear* us pray? How can they better learn that we love them too well to see them grow in sin?

Perhaps some loving, timid mother will say, "I could not pray aloud before my children."

Oh! dear mother, try it, and it will not be the *last*, if the *first* time. It is not only your children who get the blessing, for from your own heart is lifted a burden of care, and faith and hope claim in sweet anticipation a life pure and beautiful for your sons and your daughters, which you are conscious you are unable to secure for them by your own best efforts to instruct them aright.

To me it seems when mothers pray *with* their offspring, as well as *for* them, evil will meet with a force too powerful for combat, for our young men and maidens will be clad in an armour which no foe can penetrate, even "the whole armour of God."

E. R.

PRAYING MOTHERS.

HEAVEN sees no sight more in harmony with the heart of God than a mother pleading for her own offspring. She asks for grace to train her child aright; and then she begs that her boy may be precious in the sight of the Lord. Her cry is not that wealth or honour may await the object of her solicitude, but she implores that grace may renew his heart. Her requests flow from her very soul, she entreats as for her own life. Day by day this becomes her incessant cry at the mercy seat, nor does she pause until her heart's desire is surely granted her.

Is she doing nothing, or doing little, in all this? Assuredly she is performing the best possible service for Christ and for His Church. Little will be known or said of such wrestlings with God, but they are among those eminent deeds by which the kingdom of God cometh among men. The commonplaces of a holy home are rich with sublime consequences. A mother will be very unwise if she sighs for publicity, and pants for open recognition as a speaker or worker abroad; hers is a position honourable enough for a queen if she trains her children in the fear of the Lord. Many daughters have done excellently in the committee, or in the sick ward, or with the pen; but the matron who has prayed her children to the Saviour is not a whit behind the very chief of the Lord's servants. Blessed among women shall she be; she shall live in her grateful sons.

O that all mothers were prayerful for their families, and then hopeful for them! Example must follow prayer, and exhortation must go with example; then may the parent expect the Holy Spirit to perform His work of grace, and she shall have joy in the children whom the Lord has given her.

"My mother," writes one, "was left a widow with eleven children. My youngest sister, with whom she slept, would often wake up at midnight and find that her mother had left her side, and on her knees was pouring out her soul to God in prayer for their conversion. Before she died she had the happiness of seeing the last of the eleven received into the Church of Christ."

Another writes: "My mother had fifteen children. She

prayed and confidently looked for their conversion. Four of her sons became preachers of the Gospel. Before her death every one of the fifteen had openly made profession of faith in Christ."

"Tell the mothers to trust in God," was the dying charge of one who had herself been a "mother in Israel," and had trained up a family in the service of the Redeemer.

A good woman, whose son was in the army, made a patchwork quilt for the Soldiers' Hospital. In the white squares were texts of Scripture—every block had been prayed and wept over. Many poor fellows had lain under that quilt. In course of time a boy came; he was nearly senseless for more than a week. At last he was seen to kiss the patchwork quilt. It was thought he was wandering, or had found a text of hope or comfort. But no; it was a calico block, a little crimson leaf on a dark ground. He kept looking at it, tears in his eyes; he kissed it again, and asked, "Do you know where this quilt came from?" He was told a good woman had sent it, with a note pinned on to it. This they showed him at his request. His hand

The Children's Prayer-time.

trembled, his cheek grew white, when he saw the writing. "Please read it to me very slowly," he said. It was read. "It is from my mother; that bit of calico was part of her dress." Afterwards he pointed out the text, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight," and said, "I am no more worthy." The rest of the parable was read to him. A few days after, he said, "I was a great way off; but God has met me, and had compassion on me: the Saviour's love fills me with peace." So the mother's prayers were answered, and her son saved.

John Newton, the famous hymn-writer, in his worst days could never forget his praying mother, at whose knees he had learnt to pray, but who was taken to heaven when he was but eight years old. "My mother's God, the God of mercy, have mercy upon me!" was often his agonising prayer in danger; and we all know how strikingly it was answered.

"There is a power the saints can wield
When mortal aid is vain—
That power is prayer, which soars on high
Through Jesus to the throne,
And moves the Hand which moves the world,
To bring salvation down." L. H. G.

ETIQUETTE FOR CHILDREN.

IT is regretably true that too many mothers neglect the important element of etiquette in the training of their children. In fact, we may well ask, do young folks at any time have the respectful manners that distinguished those of two generations ago? There has undoubtedly been a great change in manners generally within the last forty years, and, unfortunately, children have been affected by it more visibly than any others. Gone is the old-time courtesy which children showed to their elders, especially to the aged. I remember when boys were taught to raise their hats to teachers, and the girls to courtesy. In reply to all questions it was the rule rather than the exception to answer, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir," to a gentleman, and "Yes, ma'am," or "No, ma'am," to a lady. The change is to be deplored.

And yet we cannot entirely blame the children. The fault lies chiefly with their parents, principally their mothers. We cannot expect all children, indeed, to be models of propriety, but they can be taught to be thoughtful of others, unselfish, respectful, and courteous. Especially should they know how to behave politely in the dining-room. If there is one thing more than another that shows our bringing up, as we say, it is our manners at table and the way we eat. Yet how often is one's whole meal made unpleasant by some unruly or misbehaved child! Mothers cannot be oblivious to the misdemeanours of their boys and girls in this respect. Possibly, however, they may not realise that the responsibility of their children's behaviour, or misbehaviour, rests upon them. But it is as necessary to teach the little ones good manners as that they must not eat too much.

In the first place, are not children over-petted and allowed too many privileges in these days? In many homes the children are the real managers. They monopolise the conversation, and continually interrupt their elders while talking. This is all wrong. Such a mode, or rather, lack of training, fosters their selfishness and vanity, and renders them real nuisances of fault-finding and discourtesy. Children should be taught to be unobtrusive when in the presence of guests or those older than themselves.

Only the other day I was greatly shocked while visiting at a friend's house by the ill manners of her little boy, who was not quite ten years old. At dinner, before we were all fairly seated for the meal he leaned forward upon the table, knife and fork in hand, and exclaimed in a loud and peremptory tone: "I want some of the plum pudding, but I won't have any bread."

"You must wait, Carl," said the father, sternly.

Afterwards he was helped three times to the plum pudding, though several of the older ones had a much smaller amount in consequence. I imagined that his mother might feel ashamed of his want of good breeding, but the little fellow afterwards remarked to me confidentially, "Mamma always says I may have the lion's share of anything."

At another home which I visited recently the children all came to the table with dirty hands and faces and uncombed hair. They put the food into their mouths with knives, spilled their coffee on the tablecloth, and even threw water across the table—much to the ruffling of my feelings and the risk of damage to my new dress. Their mother rebuked them, but it was plain to see that it was their ordinary way of acting. These are not by any means exceptional cases. Like instances, no doubt, have come under the observation of most people.

Ought it to be so? Ought children to grow up without being instructed in the rudiments of good manners? Perhaps some over-burdened mother says she cannot always take time to see to little matters of dress and behaviour; but she can take time to teach even the little ones to be careful in these things for themselves; and a habit of good behaviour once formed soon becomes second nature. The laws of cleanliness and propriety and the etiquette of the table are essential parts of a child's education, which it is an unkindness to the child to neglect.

Personal neatness, quietness of demeanour, and a willingness to wait for others, the use of the fork instead of the knife in conveying food to the mouth, the absence of fault-finding, eating and drinking without making uncouth noises—these all ought to be equally observed as a part of table etiquette, and the youngest boy or girl can easily practise them. Nor should they forget the "Please" and "Thank you," that have so much to do towards making children attractive.

Mothers who realise the importance of everything that tends to make their children's society a pleasure to others, will bear me out when I say that it is wrong to ignore these things; and the children who are wisely and carefully trained in the observance of good manners will, in later years, bless their mothers for having fitted them to go through the world with that courtesy and grace of manner which goes so far to the making of an attractive personality.

CLINTON MONTAGUE.

MOTHERS, SPEAK GENTLY.

I KNOW some houses, well built and handsomely furnished, where it is not pleasant to be even a visitor. Sharp, angry tones resound through them from morning till night; and the influence is as contagious as measles—and how much more to be dreaded in a household!

The children catch this influence and it lasts for life, an almost incurable disease. A friend has such a neighbour within hearing of her house when doors and windows are open, and even Poll Parrot has caught the tone, and delights in screaming and scolding, until she has been sent into the country to improve her habits. Children catch cross tones more quickly than parrots. Where mother sets the example you will scarcely hear a pleasant word among the children in their play with each other, and the discipline of such a family is always weak and irregular. The children expect a scolding before they will do anything they are told to do. What a contrast to all this is the home where the *low, firm tone of the mother*, or a decided look of her steady eye, is *law*, and where the children never think of disobedience either in or out of her sight!

O mothers! it is worth a great deal to cultivate that "excellent thing in a woman," a *low, sweet voice*. If you are ever so much tired by the mischievous or wilful pranks of the little ones, *speak gently*. It will be a great help to you to even try to be patient and cheerful, if you cannot wholly succeed. Anger makes you wretched, and your children also. Impatient, angry tones never yet did any good, but they have done plenty of evil. You cannot have the excuse for them that they lighten your burdens—they only make them ten times heavier. For your own, as well as your children's sake, learn to speak gently. They will remember your low, sweet tones when your head is under the willows. So, too, would they remember a harsh and angry voice. Which legacy will you leave to your children?

TO CLEAN WINDOWS.

CLEANING windows is an important part of the work of housekeeping, and while it does not seem a difficult task to keep the glass clear and bright, it nevertheless requires a knowledge both of what to do and what not to do. Never wash windows when the sun is shining upon them, otherwise they will be cloudy and streaky from drying before they are well polished off; and never wash the outside of the window first, if you wish to save trouble. Dust the sash and glass, and wash the window inside, using a little ammonia in the water; wipe with a cloth free from lint, and polish off with soft paper. For the corners use a small brush, or a pointed stick covered with one end of the cloth is useful. By cleaning the inside of the glass first in this way, the defects remaining on the outside will be more clearly seen. Wipe the panes as soon as possible after washing and rinsing, and polish with either chamois or soft paper. In rinsing, one may dash the water on the outside, or use a large sponge, which is preferable to a cloth.

HOW TO SWEEP A ROOM.

FIRST get ready. Take up all the rugs and shake them out-of-doors, sweep them, and have them all ready to put down again. Remove all the bric-à-brac into another room, dust it carefully, and have it all ready to put in place again. Take out of the room all the furniture easily removable and dust it carefully. Cover up all articles that cannot be removed, and roll up the curtains out of the way. Then sweep one breadth of the carpet from side to side, rather than from end to end, using the dust-pan along the seam and taking up the dust as you proceed. For obvious reasons, it is a great mistake not to do this. Have a piece of cane near by, to use in raking out the corners. When the carpet is thoroughly swept, wipe it with a woollen cloth wrung frequently from clean warm water. By this time the dust will have settled, and the room may be carefully dusted, first with a dry cloth, and when necessary with a damp one. Then everything that has been taken out can quickly be put in place again. And what a pleasure there is in knowing that every nook and corner is scrupulously clean, and every article of furniture and decoration is fresh from the hands of the cleaner!

A WHOLESOME STIMULANT.

MILK heated to much above 100 degrees Fahrenheit loses for a time some of its sweetness and density. No one, however, who, fatigued by over-exertion of body or mind, has ever experienced the reviving influence of a tumbler of this beverage, taken as hot as it can be sipped, will willingly forego a resort to it because of its being rendered somewhat less acceptable to the palate. The promptness with which its cordial influence is felt is indeed surprising. Some portion of it seems to be digested and appropriated almost immediately, and many who now fancy that they need alcoholic stimulants when exhausted by fatigue, will find in this simple draught an equivalent that will be abundantly satisfying, and far more enduring in its effects.

There is many a weak, over-worked woman who unwisely fancies that she could not keep up without her beer; she mistakes its momentary exhilaration for strength, and applies the whip instead of nourishment to her poor, exhausted frame. Any honest, intelligent physician will tell her that there is more real strength and nourishment in a slice of bread, or in the wholesome stimulant of a glass of hot milk, than in a quart of beer. Only let the experiment of our simple substitute be fairly tried, and its successful effects will be soon apparent.

A MOTHER'S ARGUMENT.

"THE most-to-be-regretted act of my life," says a lieutenant in the British navy, "was a letter which I wrote home to my mother, when about seventeen years of age. She always addressed her letters to me as 'My dear boy.' I felt at that time I was a man, or very near it, and wrote saying that her constant addressing me as a 'boy' made me feel displeased.

"I received in reply a letter full of reproaches and tears. Among other things, she said: 'You might grow to be as big as Goliath, as strong as Samson, and as wise as Solomon; you might become ruler of a nation, or emperor of many nations, and the world might revere you and fear you; but to your devoted mother you would always appear in memory in your innocent, unpretentious, unconceited, unpampered babyhood In those days when I washed and dressed and kissed and fervently loved you, you were altogether precious to me. Nowadays you are becoming part of a gross world, by contact with it; but if you can still appreciate maternal affection, you will surely understand that the highest compliment mother-love can pay you is to call you 'my dear boy.'"

A MOTHER'S NOTES ON DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

In making a dress skirt, ladies should be careful to have it wrap well over at the back. The present style of cutting dress skirts so as to have them nearly tight-fitting at the top, makes them very apt to gape open and show the under-garments. One or two examples of this kind which have come under our notice lately seem to render our remarks necessary. Narrow trimmings of rolled satin or silk in most of the leading colours can be bought very reasonably in price. These make quite a pretty finish to a dress bodice.

Fig. 35.

Capes and tippets of all sizes are worn by children, as well as by the mother and elder sisters. Fichus with long ends in front, or taken under the arms and tied at the back, have returned to favour, and are very often made in the same material as the dress. Reefer coats, both for boys and girls, are still worn, as is also the navy-blue sailor blouse, with kilted skirts. A white flannel blouse sometimes replaces the blue; on other occasions a white collar is used, and makes a nice finish to the blue serge blouses.

The new tweeds shown for autumn wear are fine, soft, and light, while many charming effects are produced by the combination of colours and in weaving. Large and small checks are much in favour; indeed, very few plain materials will be used this season.

Fig. 35. This illustrates a little girl's pelisse such as will be worn by girls up to the age of ten. All pelisses are made on a yoke, and have full sleeves, but great variations are made in the shape of the small cape which finishes the shoulders. The more simple shapes have the yoke outlined with a frill, while others have two or three capes of different lengths. Our example was made in green cloth, and for a girl of eight years three yards of habit cloth would be required. The full skirt below the yoke is faced with silk or sateen of the same colour, and the button-holes are made on a stay, so that the pelisse closes invisibly. The short pointed cape is gathered with several runners, and the edge is pinked out and trimmed with coffee-coloured lace. The collar is formed also by running a straight strip of the cloth, about three inches wide, pinking it out at both edges. A deep cuff finishes the full puffed sleeve. Pelisses of this shape are very easily made, while they afford ample protection in bad weather. As the season advances, the lace may be removed, and this can be done without the necessity of replacing it by other trimming.

Fig. 36.

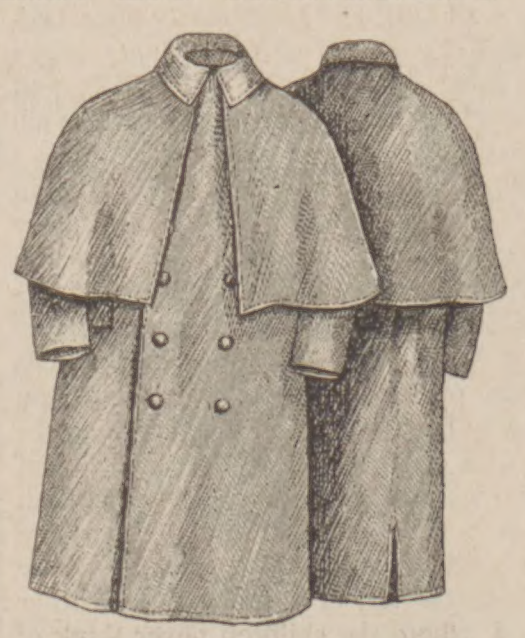


Fig. 37.

Fig. 36. Here we show a lady's dressing gown or morning wrapper. It is cut in the Princess style, and the fulness at the waist is drawn in both back and front with gathers, and secured by an elastic band on the inside. A fitting lining can be used for the body, if preferred, but if a very thick material be employed, this will not be necessary. A frill of material, about six inches wide, falls over the neck, and is taken down the front of the gown, either as far as the waist or to the bottom of the skirt, getting gradually narrower. The sleeve is finished with a similar frill, drawn in with a bow of ribbon. It is surprising what choice patterns can be obtained in flannelette at a very moderate cost, some of which will wash very well, and are just the thing for dressing-gowns. Pure woollen flannel is, of course, much warmer, and will wear better, but the cost is considerably more. Last year we showed a gentleman's dressing-gown (fig. 34), the pattern of which is still on sale.

Fig. 37. A boy's overcoat, with three-quarter cape. This coat is made in a fancy grey tweed, which is capital for wear, as it does not show the dirt like a brown or black cloth does. The coat is loose-fitting, and the fronts are cut double-breasted. There is nothing very difficult in the making of this coat, as the pockets, which give so much trouble to amateur tailoresses, are laid on the wrong side, and covered by a pocket tab.

Fig. 38 shows a lady's afternoon apron, trimmed with lace. Very often the lace taken off an old mantle will iron up, and answer very well to trim an apron. Black Italian cloth is the material used, and the apron will take three-quarters of a yard. The body is finished with bows on the shoulders, and the straps at the back fasten inside the waist-band.

Fig. 38.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 35, 36, and 37, 6½d. each; fig. 38, 4½d. Address, "M. C." Pattern, 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.